

**Remarks Following Discussions With
Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany
and an Exchange With Reporters in
Baumholder**

December 2, 1995

The President. Good afternoon. I have just finished a very good set of briefings from our military commanders about the plans to deploy in Bosnia to enforce the peace agreement. And I have received a report from General Joulwan about the meeting of the North Atlantic Council which has, in essence, approved the military plan for implementing the peace agreement, which I signed off on just a few days ago in the Oval Office.

So I feel very good about what I have seen, about the morale of our troops. As you saw, I shook hands with several hundred of them, and I then had lunch with a significant number of them. I think their morale is high. They are well aware that they have been very well-trained. They are very supportive of the rules of engagement which give them the tools they need to do their job.

But I would say more than anything else, the men and women with whom I spoke today are committed to the humanitarian mission of saving the lives of the children and innocent civilians. And they understand that they are going there not in war but in peace, to facilitate a peace agreement, and that this is very different from having been involved in a conflict. And so we're working hard, and I feel good about where we are.

I also had a wonderful extended visit with Chancellor Kohl on the way down here, and he shared a lot of his thoughts with me. And of course, Germany has been a great partner in this and in some ways has borne, perhaps, the heaviest financial burden of the Bosnian war because of the many hundreds of thousands of refugees which have been taken in and sustained by the German people.

So I would like to ask Chancellor Kohl to make whatever comments he would like to make, and then we'll have questions.

Chancellor Kohl. Mr. President, I would like to bid you once again a very warm welcome here to our country. This has been a very impressive day that we shared here today. And I must say that I'm gratified that I'm yet again able to say this here in

Baumholder, to say once again what, for us here in Germany, the Alliance has meant these past four decades.

The Alliance for us meant peace and freedom for our country. It meant that we were given the opportunity, together with our American friends, to overcome the division of our country and to win unity for Germany. And I don't think there's any other place where one is in a better position to say something like that than here. Because, Bill, I'm confident that when this message is being sent here from Baumholder to the United States, then hundreds of thousands, even millions of Americans will remember the days when they themselves as soldiers or relatives spent time here in Baumholder. And I would like to state clearly that we have not forgotten what our American friends have done for us.

And it was a very impressive day for me, too, because it brought home to me the determination of the President of the United States and of the people of the United States to make, through their mission, possible that peace finally comes to Bosnia and that the agreement is being implemented.

And I would like to say to the mothers and fathers who send their sons and their daughters out with this mission out to Bosnia, that they send out their sons and their daughters in order to assure peace and to safeguard peace. And that is the best possible mission for any army in the world.

And I would like to use this opportunity here, Bill, to thank you, to thank the President of the United States for the determination to act that they have shown here. You are in a proud American tradition in so doing, a proud tradition that has always said that the United States should not look away but that they should show leadership and become active.

Obviously, I would never dare to interfere in American domestic politics. But I would like to know as many Americans as possible that we hope for the broadest possible support of the people of the United States of America for the President and the Army in this important endeavor.

We, ourselves, have made a decisive step in the right direction; 4,000 German soldiers will go, will be sent to the region. And I

would like to wish all of the troops going into the region—American troops, British troops, French troops, German troops, from whatever nation they may be sent—I would like to wish them Godspeed and a safe return back to their families.

And I must say that I came away very much impressed from the luncheon, where I had the opportunity to talk to family members as well, impressed by the calm and the steadfastness of the wives and the relatives—the wives obviously being afraid, which is very understandable under the circumstances, but showing a quiet resolve to support their husbands and seeing how important this mission is.

Thank you.

Bosnia

Q. How many Americans will be spending Christmas in Bosnia?

The President. You'll have to ask General Joulwan that. I don't know that. We will—obviously, under the peace agreement, deployments have to begin shortly after the signing of the agreement. But it will take some considerable amount of time for a full buildup. So I would think there would be probably fewer than half of the total force could be there by Christmas, maybe even less than that. That's a question you should ask General Joulwan. Right now it's strictly a matter of military planning.

Q. Mr. President, have you approved the execute order for the deployment of U.S. troops? And also, you have said many times that it's expected that it would be one year for the U.S. troops. Does that also pertain to other NATO troops? How long would they be there?

The President. The timeframe is for the military mission, not specifically for the American troops. It is the military mission. Because of the specific functions delegated to the military, as opposed to the civilians—keep in mind, what the military is supposed to do is maintain the cease-fire, separate the forces, create the zone of separation, supervise the transfer of property and the redeployment of forces, and then maintain a secure environment so there can be free movement throughout the country, so the refugees can go home and the reconstruction can

begin and the elections can be held. It is believed by all of our planners and agreed to by the people who signed the peace treaty that that should be done in about a year. And it's completely different from the civilian practices.

The answer to your first question is, no, I have not, but I will as soon as it's presented to me. I have given a prior general approval to our military planners, as I announced to the Congress, to send a small force in to do the planning work in anticipation of the signing of the treaty and no adverse developments between now and the treaty signing on the 14th in Paris. But that is all I intend to do before Congress has a chance to speak its mind. I thought—I believe that I have no alternative. So I have not done it now, yet, but I will as soon as presented with the decision.

Any German press have a question? No—

Q. Mr. President, as Commander in Chief, how difficult is it for you to look into the faces of these young men and women who are about to go into a dangerous situation to carry out your orders?

The President. Well, I wanted to come here to look into their faces and into the faces of their wives, their husbands, and their children because I think they are about to do a very noble and important thing for our country and for the world. And I wanted to come here and directly say to them. "Here is why I want you to go, and here is what you will be doing and what you will not be doing. We have done everything we could to minimize the risks, but there still are some, and here is what we expect to do about that."

I wanted to give them those straight answers. I wanted to look at them—you know, I spent quite a long time there today and I talked to several hundred of them briefly today, and I frankly was very moved by the responses they gave. I think they understand it's not a risk-free mission, but I believe they understand its importance and the fundamentally honorable nature of it.

Once again, the United States has no hidden or dark motives here. We simply want to restore peace and democracy and a decent life to those people.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, Chancellor Kohl expressed the hope that you would have the American people behind you. Do you think you do have the American people's support for it?

The President. I think that the support is building in the United States, and I think that the support for the troops and their mission will be universal. It always has been, and I believe it will be now.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the Rheinlander Building at the Baumholder Army Base. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address

December 2, 1995

Good morning. Today I am speaking to you from Germany, and I am with the men and women of the United States Army's 1st Armored Division. For the last 4 days, I have been on a journey of peace that has taken me from Britain to Ireland to Germany. I have shaken the hands, heard the voices, and seen the faces of those all over Europe who long for peace, peace in Northern Ireland and peace in Bosnia.

I will never forget the two young children in Belfast, one Catholic, who lost her father, and one Protestant. These children joined their hands and told the world of their dreams for a future of peace and their gratitude that America is working for peace.

I'll never forget the tens of thousands of people in Derry and in Dublin whose surging cheers and sea of American flags symbolized the friendship between our people and their appreciation that America is a force for a fair peace in Northern Ireland.

People in England and Germany and even people in Ireland also said they wanted peace and an end to the tragedy in Bosnia. Wherever I went and whomever I talked to, from ordinary citizens to prime ministers and parliamentarians, the message to me was the same: American leadership for peace matters. American leadership is welcome in Europe. American leadership is necessary in Europe, whether to achieve peace in Northern Ireland or join in implementing the peace in Bosnia.

Europe's freedom and strength and stability are essential to our own freedom, strength, and stability. That's why twice in this century American troops have fought in wars on European soil. That's why we stayed there during the cold war until victory was won. And that's why our soldiers are still stationed in Europe today.

Today I am visiting many of the brave young Americans who are preparing to leave for Bosnia. I spoke today to the 1st Armored Division, our country's Iron Soldiers. They are the frontline fighters of our country; they have been from World War II right through the Persian Gulf war. But this time, they're not being sent to war, they're being sent to guarantee peace. They have the noblest mission of all: to stop incredible human suffering and lift people's lives.

Over the last 4 years, a quarter of a million Bosnians have been killed. More than half of Bosnia's people have been driven from their homes; a million of them are still refugees. We have seen parents divided from their children, children deprived of their dreams, people caged like animals in concentration camps, women and young girls subject to systematic rape. We have seen unbelievable horrors. But now we have a chance to end this misery for good, and we have a responsibility to act.

This will be a difficult mission in a hard corner of the world. But let's remember, it is a peace that the people of Bosnia want. It is a peace that they have demanded. The leaders of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia understand that. That's why they reached a peace agreement in Dayton last month. And that's why they asked for America's help. They have made a serious commitment to peace, but they can't do it alone. There have been so many things happen in that poor, war-torn country that trust is a rare commodity, and they need our help to help reestablish the conditions under which people can live in decency and peace.

The three leaders of all three countries have emphasized in letters to me, and I quote, "that the NATO-led implementation force is essential to the success of the peace settlement." And they have pledged, and again I quote, "to take all possible measures to ensure the safety and security of all Amer-